

# Maiden Speech

House of Assembly

May 13, 2010

The SPEAKER: The member for Flinders, one of my neighbours, a new member, and I would ask that in the usual tradition his speech be heard in silence.

Mr TRELOAR (Flinders) (16:40): Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is with great pride that I take my seat in this house as the newly elected member for Flinders. Before I begin my remarks, I congratulate you, Madam Speaker, on gaining the high office of Speaker. I note that, given that Flinders and Giles share a long common boundary, we are, in fact, next door neighbours. I also extend my congratulations to the member for Bright on her elevation to the role of Deputy Speaker.

I would like to thank His Excellency the Governor for opening this the 52<sup>nd</sup> Parliament of South Australia, and for his speech delivered on this occasion. I support the motion to adopt the address in reply.

I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the previous member for Flinders, Mrs Liz Penfold, for serving the electorate with conviction, passion and enthusiasm for the past 16 years. Her contribution to this house, her dedication to the electorate and to her constituents, is to be congratulated and admired. Liz was held in high regard throughout the electorate and I have been reminded often that I have big shoes to fill. This is a challenge that I am looking forward to undertaking.

I would like to thank the previous member for Stuart, the recently retired Graham Gunn, for his encouragement and support of me along the way. Unfortunately, I will have to learn the ropes from opposition, but I look forward to taking the debate up to the government over the next four years.

I also wish to congratulate all new members, here and in the other place, and those members who have been re-elected. I look forward to working with you all in a constructive and courteous manner. I have enjoyed listening to those maiden speeches already delivered. It is said that a cross-section of members of parliament represents a cross-section of the broader community. That is, undoubtedly, a good and necessary thing. I sincerely thank those members who have chosen to stay in the house today to listen to my address.

I pay tribute to our tenacious leader, Isobel Redmond. In fact, Isobel chose Flinders as the first regional electorate to visit on becoming leader. I am sure other country members on this side appreciate her fantastic efforts in getting around to the regions and connecting with the people, and she certainly struck a chord with constituents.

I would also like to thank all the Liberal Party branches and members in Flinders for the enormous help prior to and during the election campaign. Without them it is impossible to undertake the huge logistical exercise of running a campaign and organising polling day itself.

To the electors of Flinders, I sincerely thank you for entrusting me with the important responsibility of being your representative in this parliament. May I also thank the state secretariat of the Liberal Party and campaign headquarters, particularly the campaign director, Julian Sheezel, and his team at headquarters. An election campaign is a stressful and very busy time, as all of you would know. So, I commend the Liberal Party as a whole on a very professional campaign.

I will now, just briefly, outline some of the history of the electorate of Flinders, as I believe that it is important to remind people in this place about the diverse and beautiful parts of this great state, and particularly country South Australia. Flinders was originally a district for the Legislative Council of 1851 to 1856. It was one of the original 17 state electorates created in 1856 and effective at the first elections held for a bicameral parliament in South Australia in 1857. It is the only district to have survived in name to the present day. The current electoral boundaries encompass a large portion of the Eyre Peninsula, all of the West Coast of South Australia out to the Western Australian border, and surrounds an area of approximately 58,000 square kilometres, with a coastline in excess of 2,500 kilometres. Flinders today consists of nine local government areas and one outback area. Major

service centres include: Port Lincoln, Ceduna, Streaky Bay, Elliston, Wudinna, Lock, Cleve, Cowell, Tumbly Bay, Cummins and, of course, the mighty metropolis of Edillilie.

Our local economy is based on primary production—dry land mixed farming, fishing, aquaculture and the relatively new industry of fish ranching, plus small areas of viticulture and speciality crops—that generates well in excess of \$1 billion worth of production annually. Our agricultural land managers and those in the fishing industry are to be congratulated for their efforts in making their production systems truly sustainable. They are ably assisted in this by the Marine Science Centre at Port Lincoln and the Minnipa agricultural research centre. The Minnipa research centre was, in fact, managed for many years by Bob Holloway, brother of minister Holloway who sits in the other place.

This question of sustainability has allowed Eyre Peninsula to produce a third of South Australia's annual grain harvest, most of which is exported to markets around the world. We also produce two thirds of the state's seafood harvest and run about 6 per cent of the state's livestock, all of which provides valuable export income for this state. Our producers will continue this sustainable production, and even increase it, through the adoption of new and exciting technologies. Local, national and international tourists find the spectacular scenery and relaxed lifestyle provides a wonderful holiday destination. The promotion and marketing of regional tourism must be improved, and Flinders is certainly one of the jewels in the crown in terms of attracting intrastate, interstate and overseas tourists.

Seventy five per cent of Australia's gypsum is mined at Purnong and exported through Thevenard. This, along with salt, grain, and, more recently, mineral sands has made Thevenard one of the busiest ports in the state. Ninety per cent of the world's supply of black jade is mined at Cowell. Certainly, the Eyre Peninsula offers significant mining potential, particularly iron ore, with most recent estimates putting the reserves of ore at between 5 billion and 10 billion tonnes. Our challenge will be to capitalise on these reserves whilst at the same time being mindful of the rights of existing land uses and existing landowners, both rural and urban. This government has for eight years talked the talk when it comes to a so-called mining boom and the associated jobs and benefits to the community, and it must now deliver. Exporting iron ore from the Eyre Peninsula has the potential to significantly broaden the base of our regional economy.

The first European to sight what was to become the West Coast of South Australia was the Dutchman, Peter Nuyts, in 1627. Nuyts accidentally bumped into the southern coast of Terra Australis, and his voyage is recalled through the name of Nuyts Archipelago off the coast of Ceduna. The electorate, of course, is named after Captain Matthew Flinders who, in 1802, with remarkable accuracy, surveyed the coastline of South Australia, naming many of the islands, inlets and landmarks after place names in his home county of Lincolnshire, England.

The township of Port Lincoln was established in 1839, just the third European settlement in South Australia, and inland exploration of the area was first undertaken by Edward John Eyre in 1840-41. The peninsula that he traversed now bears his name. Whalers, pastoralists, fishermen, farmers and surveyors soon followed. I often think that those surveyors who marked out this state for settlement are the unsung heroes. Venturing into the wilderness with a handful of axemen, pack horses and a chain measure, they pegged out roads, farms and townships. It was a truly remarkable feat that is often overlooked in history.

Settlement in the early days was confined to the coastal regions until, in an undertaking of extraordinary vision and courage, the government of the day built a railway line extending from Port Lincoln north to Cummins where it was to branch, with one line heading north and west to Purnong and the other heading northeast, to terminate at the delightfully named Buckleboo. These lines opened up vast wheat lands as well as much opportunity to the eager settlers. A spur line was also laid from Yeelanna to Mount Hope, and it was along this line, next to the siding at Yeltukka, that I grew up on our family farm.

After a couple of good seasons my parents built a new home on the farm a mile or so from where my grandparents lived. With the philosophy that one should never buy something when it can be made, they set about, with the aid of wooden moulds and a concrete mixer, to make the bricks for our house.

Also, 240 volt electricity arrived in the mid-60s, and I can remember erecting our own phone line. In those days, two longs and a short constituted a phone number. We have certainly come a long way. My childhood was spent with all the freedom and space of country life. My recollection is that half a dozen rabbit traps, a 22, a couple of the old man's Styve's and a 28 inch Super Elliott with a sprung saddle made for a productive weekend.

Ms Bedford interjecting:

Mr TRELOAR: Well, we are not allowed to. Sport was also an important part of life, and it still is for that matter. I played my first game of Aussie Rules at eight years of age for the Cummins Rambler Football Club. I played my last game for the same club at age 42. It was a long but not particularly illustrious career. In fact, I was well into my 30s before coming to the realisation—with some surprise I might add—that I was never going to play AFL football. I guess it is unlikely that one would be picked up in the draft from the back pocket in the Rambler B grade. But I was thrilled and honoured with life membership of Ramblers, the club for which my children also now play.

My primary schooling was completed at the local area school. Then, after a stint at boarding school in Adelaide, which, incidentally, I enjoyed every moment of—

Mr Venning: Prince Alfred.

Mr TRELOAR: —Prince Alfred; thank you, Ivan, another old scholar—I joined the family business of farming. My life's work thus far has been in agriculture, both as a producer and as an industry advocate. I have enjoyed immensely both the challenges and rewards of growing wheat, barley, canola and sheep, and helping build a family business based on primary production. In many ways it is the most fundamental yet most fulfilling vocation of all.

Having a strong sense of community service instilled in me by my parents, I have always been involved in our local community, and I firmly believe that communities cannot and do not function well without the support of those who live in that community, whether it is the local football team, service club, school or hospital, our involvement is paramount. To belong is such an important part of our sense of worth.

I became a founding member of the Edillilie Landcare Group, sat on the Lower Eyre Soil Conservation Board, and I am currently a member of the Cummins-Wanilla Catchment Management Group. This involvement ultimately led to membership of the inaugural Eyre Peninsula Natural Resources Management Board. Central to this is my belief that it is our natural environment that sustains us. It sustains our economy, it sustains our businesses and it sustains our communities. One of the dilemmas we face in our modern world is that many people are so far removed from the fundamentals of life that it is difficult to make sound economic judgments. Decisions that will preserve and grow our productive capacity need always to consider the environmental outcomes.

In 2002 I was fortunate to be awarded a Nuffield scholarship. This is a worldwide scholarship scheme that has been operating (initially in commonwealth countries but expanded later) for over 60 years. The Nuffield Farming Scholars Association provides the opportunity for young farmers (which I was then) to travel overseas and study a topic of choice that will enhance not only their own business but also be of benefit to agriculture generally.

For many participants (me included) the scholarship gives an opportunity to view our industry in a much broader sense. It was during this sabbatical that I became interested in, first, agripolitics and ultimately politics more generally. A long time member of the South Australian Farmers Federation, I was subsequently elected to the SAFF Grains Council. The role of this body is to lobby government (both state and federal) on behalf of primary producers. So for me began the slippery slope into politics.

My belief in small government, in the rights and power of the individual and that people are not beholden to the state but should in fact control their own destiny has led me to stand in this house as a Liberal member. It is the Liberal Party that puts faith in and empowers people. It is the Liberal Party that understands the value of communities and how they function.

Government should never make a simple task difficult nor stifle initiative through regulation and red tape. I put to you, Madam Speaker, that the role of government is to provide the framework within which our businesses, our communities and we, as individuals, can thrive and prosper. Provide the framework—nothing more, nothing less. It's quite simple. It is clear that Labor has failed in this task over two terms. I genuinely hope that Labor's promise to reconnect with the people extends to country South Australians and is not simply more empty rhetoric which unfortunately has been the hallmark of this government over the past eight years.

During the recent campaign I was able to focus very much on local issues, and I intend to highlight and pursue these same issues during my time in this parliament. Water security is without a doubt the

number one issue in South Australia and in Flinders. To give the house an understanding of our situation I will attempt to give a potted history of the water reticulation scheme on Eyre Peninsula.

Very little permanent water exists in the area and, indeed, it was because of this that Port Lincoln was passed over in favour of Adelaide as the preferred site for the state's capital. I guess if history had taken a different course, the member for Adelaide and I could well have swapped seats. Water was actually transported by train in the early days to provide the settlers with their requirements, meagre though the rations were.

During the 1920s a reservoir was built on the Tod River. Water was pumped to the top of an adjacent hill and from there it gravitated all the way to Ceduna—a distance of some 400 kilometres. At that time it was the longest gravity fed reticulation scheme in the world. It was, in fact, another fine example of vision and courage shown by the government of the day.

By the 1960s it became obvious that this supply needed to be supplemented to keep pace with the increasing demands of population and industry. A number of underground basins or lenses, as they are sometimes known, in the coastal limestone aquifers were tapped into. Increasing salinity levels in the Tod Reservoir meant that by the late 1990s the underground basins were supplying virtually all of our requirements.

Following concerns about the sustainability of the basins, it once again became necessary to augment that supply. In 2005 a further extension of the Morgan-Whyalla pipeline was built from Iron Knob through to Kimba, thus connecting for the first time what had been an autonomous scheme to the Murray River and supplying about 1.5 gegalitres annually.

SA Water has shortlisted a number of sites for the establishment of a desalinisation plant on the West Coast, and I urge the government to consider this without delay. Resurrecting the Tod Reservoir from its current dormant state would also greatly assist in the long-term water security of the peninsula. In the meantime our water situation remains precarious at best.

It is absolutely essential that country health services be maintained. In light of the proposed federal health takeover, this state government must ensure that country hospitals and country health services are not worse off. The management of country health has been one of the failings of this government. Labor has stopped listening to rural and regional communities when it comes to administration of their hospitals. The abolition of country health boards must surely go down as one of this government's biggest mistakes.

This also is the case with educational opportunities for country students. Just because a family or individual lives somewhere beyond Gepps Cross or the tollgate does not mean they do not have an equal right to those essential services that are ultimately the responsibility of a state government. It is imperative that this government understands and acknowledges the ownership that we, the people of this state, have of our schools and hospitals. Invariably, it has been the local communities themselves that identify the need for health services and education. Right across rural, regional and remote Australia these essential primary services are valued and supported by communities in a way not seen in metropolitan Adelaide. I put to the government that should it ignore country health and education, it will do so at its peril.

Investment into infrastructure projects has also been sadly lacking in recent times. If we are to maximise our potential in those areas of the economy that are truly productive then infrastructure requirements must be met. There are fish factories in Port Lincoln that are within sight of the wind farm at Cathedral Rocks yet are unable to increase their freezer capacity because they cannot source the power supply necessary to do so. It is an absurd situation.

This year five ships a fortnight need to be docked and loaded at Thevenard just to satisfy the export needs of the existing industries. This is with just one confined berthing space and a fishing industry to accommodate as well.

Serious mining ventures are being hamstrung by the lack of infrastructure, not to mention the new super tax which has the potential to derail mining development on the Eyre Peninsula before it has even begun. Ultimately it will hurt this state.

I will now go to Aboriginal affairs. The electorate of Flinders is home to a number of Indigenous communities which have contributed to the rich history and culture of the regions, particularly in the traditional Aboriginal lands, as well as in Port Lincoln and Ceduna. Aboriginal affairs policy directly affects many people in Flinders, so I do commend the work of the many members in this place who

have had a positive impact on developing policies that improves the lives of Indigenous people across the state. However, there is still much to be done. Access to health services, education and increased life expectancy are all areas that can be improved. It is my hope that the spirit of bipartisanship on Aboriginal affairs policy will continue over the life of this government, for the betterment of Aboriginal communities in Flinders and indeed across South Australia.

I will briefly turn to the issue of road infrastructure and road maintenance. Neglecting our roads compromises road safety and adds to the cost of doing business in regional South Australia. This government has not significantly improved ageing road infrastructure in regional SA, nor has it invested enough in road maintenance in regional SA. I acknowledge that road infrastructure must be addressed by all three tiers of government in order to see significant improvements in this area.

I have spent time talking about all those things that need addressing in Flinders, but it is paramount also that we look at the positives. As I mentioned earlier, Flinders is a wonderful part of this state: rich in resources, productive and with a spectacular landscape. It is my belief that as a region we have huge potential and a wonderful future. The reason I say this is because our greatest asset is our people: industrious, resilient, involved and warm. It is the people that make our community great.

My intention during my time in this parliament will be to ensure that the regions of this state are recognised for the contribution that we make to the state's economy. Eighty per cent of South Australia's export income is produced from the regions. Many seem to have forgotten that or are simply oblivious to the fact. In many respects metropolitan Adelaide has become a vortex that has sucked funding and centralised services, to the detriment of those in rural and regional South Australia.

The people in the country and in the regions who drive our export economy are fully aware that the population of Adelaide commands the lion's share of the state's wealth and resources. However, what we want and what we deserve is simply a fair go. That means a government that delivers on essential services and returns a fair share of the state's resources to the regions. The Liberal Party in this respect is streets ahead of Labor when it comes to standing up for rural and regional South Australia. My aim is to return to that vision and courage in government that I referred to earlier.

Finally, as all have done in the past, I wish to express my sincere gratitude to a number of people in particular for their guidance and assistance over a long time. First, I thank my parents, Brian and Wendy, for the brilliant example they have provided me with throughout my life. There is no doubt that their hard work and commitment to family have given me many wonderful opportunities. I will be forever grateful.

I would like to thank my two brothers, Michael and John, and their respective families for the support they have given me and the friendship we have enjoyed. We have worked and played together for a very long time. Somebody had to get those Stuyvies!

To my mother-in-law, Dawn, who provided a hot meal, a bed in Lincoln when I needed it and loads of support—thank you. I acknowledge a much more recent supporter in my life, Jacqui Merchant, who joined me for the campaign in the lead-up to the recent election. Jacqui is here today, and I thank you for your help during that time. Your experience and sound guidance proved invaluable, and I look forward to continuing to work with you.

I also make mention of Simon Halliwell, who is here today, and Aimee Pedler, both of whom were invaluable through the campaign and who, I am very pleased to say, have agreed to continue working with me on a more formal basis.

To my colleagues on this side of the house, many of whom made the trek to Flinders during the campaign, your support was invaluable. I also thank all those friends who have supported and assisted me in any way in my efforts to become a member of parliament. They are too numerous to mention, but I express my gratitude to them all.

I thank my wife, Annette, who is in the gallery today, and our children, the eldest of whom is Thomas, who is also here along with his friend Daniel Juke, and I also acknowledge Mike Wake up in the gallery. Good to see you, Mike!

An honourable member: Rural youth!

Mr TRELOAR: Rural youth! We go back a long way, Mike.

*There being a disturbance in the Strangers' Gallery:*

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr TRELOAR: It's a small world, Madam Speaker. To my wife, Annette, and our children Thomas, Madeleine, Henry and Max—the biggest thank you of all. Their support, encouragement and patience has been a great inspiration to me and, whatever comes to pass in this place or in any other part of my life, I will always cherish my family as my most significant achievement.

Finally, I give my undertaking to the people of Flinders that I will serve and represent them to the best of my ability without fear or favour in this esteemed house in the Parliament of South Australia.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

The SPEAKER: Congratulations to the member for Flinders. I am sure that we will work as well as we can from opposite sides of the house. Congratulations to you and well done.